

Save Orchestra Hall, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra Hall's Generous Donors

Rehabilitation of Orchestra Hall



The restoration of Orchestra Hall is one of the most important historic rehabilitation projects ever undertaken in the state of Michigan. In 1970 Orchestra Hall, occupied only by pigeons, faced demolition to make way for a fast food restaurant. When the water was turned off, Detroit Symphony Orchestra bassoonist Paul Ganson rallied citizens to save the threatened concert hall. He founded Save Orchestra Hall, a grassroots organization that devoted itself to the

preservation of the building. Over the next three decades the decorative plasterwork, the box seating, and aisle and stage lighting were restored and improved. The architectural details and decorative painting were replicated using the architect's original notes. The facade restoration and the installation of the historically accurate iron awning and marquee were replicated from early photographs. The completely restored building and the adjacent Max M. Fisher Music Center were dedicated in 2003.

When looking at Orchestra Hall today, it is difficult to realize how close we came to losing this magnificent structure. The building would certainly have been lost without the activist members of Save Orchestra Hall, the commitment of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and the generosity of Orchestra Hall's donors.

